



Richard Muccini

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As a child in school, Richard Muccini would often “doodle and draw.” But it wasn’t until years later, in the early 1980s, that he had the desire to paint. His career in the computer industry took him to New York City, where the world of art opened up to him on his visits to the great museums and galleries.

He laughs as he reminisces, “I would look at a painting and say, ‘I could do that.’” He soon learned, however, that it wasn’t as easy as he thought, so he stopped by the Art Students League. “I walked in there as naïve as I could be and checked out the catalogue of classes.” He chose Gregg Kreutz, who did mostly still lifes. He was attracted to Kreutz’s works by the “realism, mystery, and quality of peace. They’re very serene.” And then he quickly adds, “I’m a very quiet person.”

At the League, he recalls, most of the classes focused on abstract painting. Kreutz and David Leffel were among the few teaching realism. “Their inspiration was Rembrandt.” But in those days, he says, teachers of realism “were swimming upstream.”

Explaining his choice, Muccini notes, “It’s hard to take your personality out of your painting.” And still-life painting seems an apt expression of this tall man with

white hair living in a pristine setting in a quiet location in the town of Sandwich. And, he adds: “You have much more control over a still life [than a landscape].”

It was his childhood connections to Sandwich that beckoned him to return. Residing in the Boston area, his family spent summer vacations in Sandwich. After living in a number of places, he, his wife, and daughter settled there in the mid-1990s.

In his studio, a few steps away from his home, north light shines through the skylight on a bright winter day. It is there, warmed by a propane stove, that Muccini paints his still lifes. He also paints landscapes and portraits, but neat arrangements of fruit, vases, teapots, and bowls always call to him. “Sometimes,” he laughs, “they yell at me; they fight back. Some days they just don’t work.” But judging from the canvases all around us, they mostly do. Muccini may work from photographs, but, “Painting from life is better because you see more.”

On an easel is a painting in progress from an arrangement of a blue and white vase, oranges, and white daisies. “I paint shapes I like and pay attention to complementary colors,” he says, pointing out the play between the blue on the vase and the orange fruit.

Looking around at his paintings, he notices all the oranges that occupy a place in his compositions. Sure, there are also apples, grapes, and one very large painting of a single pear, but those oranges crop up again and again. “I guess I’m into oranges,” he says with a grin.

His studio is filled with vases, pots, bowls, pitcher and teakettles. “I do love painting metal,” he says, and pulls out a copper pot and pitcher to show me.

In arranging his compositions, he pays attention to various shapes and their relations. “You want the objects to overlap,” he says, but not to directly touch. “No kiss on canvas.” He finds when he overlaps the objects, “it creates some sort of tension.” He adds: “I do not try to render each object in the painting exactly. I paint the objects in a way that helps me create the mood, the mystery.”

Muccini looks to Dutch and Flemish painters and chiaroscuro, which, he thinks, “puts a little mystery in the painting.” Occasionally, he will step away from the table and paint a figure like the *Village Potter*, which captures an earlier century.

Often he turns off the studio’s overhead lights and paints relying upon the north light streaming through the skylight and just one lamp on the still life. Unlike

so many modern artists who want to collapse the three dimensions of real life to convert them to the two dimensions of a canvas, Muccini is committed to building those three dimensions.

In arranging a still life, Muccini pays sharp attention to shape, size, and texture. The smooth surface of a porcelain vase and the slick shine of a copper kettle, for example, are a contrast to the ripples on the skin of an orange.

And so it all comes to play in Muccini's paintings: the stillness of an afternoon, the charm of country life, and the personality of an artist, who, although warm and outgoing, maintains that, after all, he is a quiet man.



Blue Vase with Daisies, 2013, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches. *Courtesy of the artist*

Copper Kettle with Orange and Grapes. 2010,
oil on canvas, 12 x 16 inches. *Courtesy of the artist*



Copper and Silver. 2012, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches. *Courtesy of the artist*



Old Cape Cod. 2012, oil on canvas,
18 x 24 inches. *Courtesy of the artist*



Scargo Vase. 2013, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches.
Courtesy of the artist



Bartlett Pear. 2013, oil on canvas, 40 x 30 inches.
Courtesy of the artist



Village Potter. 2012, oil on canvas,
16 x 20 inches. Courtesy of the artist